

(S. B. 202)

(No. 48-2021)

(Approved September 21, 2021)

AN ACT

To amend Section 1.18 of Act No. 20-2017, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” in order to increase the benefits for the beneficiaries, to wit, the surviving spouse or dependents, of an employee who has fallen in the line of duty to twenty-four (24) monthly payments of the gross salary earned by the employee and to increase the funeral expense benefit item up to a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000); and for other related purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Every day, the men, women, and members of the various bureaus that compose the Department of Public Safety risk their lives in order to provide a high quality first response service for our citizens. Many of them leave their homes and family behind to work their shift with the hope of returning home safe and sound. Sadly, due to issues affecting Puerto Rico, such as crime, these servants sometimes lose their lives in the line of duty. Such was the case of three police officers at the beginning of the year, and more recently, an officer of the Ponce Motor Unit all of whom tragically died in the line of duty.

It is well known that many of these public servants represent their family’s main income. Therefore, their deaths not only bring about great pain and an emotional vacuum for their families, but also a drastic change in the family’s financial situation. The families of the heroes who have fallen in the line of duty not only have to endure the loss of their loved one, but they also have to deal with the concerns caused by the possibility of losing their homes, not being able to pay for

their basic utilities or their groceries, and being unable to meet the needs of the family, among others.

In light of the foregoing, as a matter of social justice and in recognition of the work, valor, commitment, and sacrifice of the members of the Department of Public Safety, we deem it necessary to approve this Act.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Section 1.18 of Act No. 20-2017, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 1.18.- Compensation for Death in the Line of Duty.

The Secretary shall disburse to the surviving spouse, or in the absence thereof, to the dependents of the employee who has fallen in the line of duty, an amount corresponding to twenty-four (24) monthly payments of the gross salary earned by the employee to cover urgent family needs. In addition to said payment, the Secretary is authorized to defray the funeral expenses of an employee who has fallen in the line of duty up to a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000); provided, that such compensation shall apply to municipal police officers.

These benefits shall be processed regardless of any other compensation or benefit to which the spouse or dependents of these public servants are entitled.

Section 2.- The Department of Public Safety shall adjust any regulation in effect to the provisions of this Act.

Section 3.- This Act shall take effect upon its approval. The amendments provided herein shall be retroactive up to January 1, 2021.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 48-2021 (S. B. 202)** of the **2nd Regular Session** of the **19th Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico**:

AN ACT amend Section 1.18 of Act No. 20-2017, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” in order to increase the benefits for the beneficiaries, to wit, the surviving spouse or dependents, of an employee who has fallen in the line of duty to twenty-four (24) monthly payments of the gross salary earned by the employee and to increase the funeral expense benefit item up to a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000); and for other related purposes.

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 28th day of January, 2022.

Mónica Freire-Florit, Esq.
Director